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MOTHERS OF MEN

DANIEL A. POLING

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MOTHERS OF MEN

By

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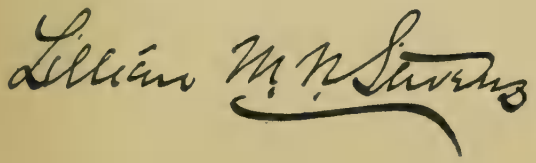
Dedicated to My Mother
and to
The Mother of My Children

THE FOREWORD

"I followed this address with rapt attention when it was first delivered. I earnestly wished then that everybody might have the uplift and pleasure afforded by the presentation of the great theme,—eloquent, strong, tender, appealing to reason while touching the most sacred place in the heart.

"I was delighted when I learned that it was to be published in book form. Its perusal will make nobler men, more heroic women, and more loyal, home-loving boys and girls.



THE MYSTERY

Ah, lad with questioning eyes of deepest
brown
Uplifted to your mother's wondrous
face;
With chubby arms that draw the dear
head down,
And frame the smile that lights this
blessed place;
What is the question in your tou-
sled head?
You rest a moment from your sturdy
play,
And nestle quiet in the comfort of her
breast;
Your parted, ruby lips—what would
they say
If they could tell the wonder of your
boy heart's quest,
If they could lift the latch where
only thoughts may tread?

Ah, lad, a moment cradled in your mother's arms,
Unmindful of your busy world, and bent
Upon the search for that which stills your child alarms,—
This is the richest boon that heaven sent;
This is God's bravest gift, His choicest good.
I, too, have watched your mother's wondrous face,
Transfigured by the love that gave you birth,
Her hand in mine, she journeyed back through space;
Then in her eyes I saw a glory not of earth;
My son, this mystery is Motherhood.

MOTHERS OF MEN

WOMEN compose music, but they are not musicians; they paint pictures, but they are not artists; they find new stars, but they are not astronomers; they chart the rocks, but they are not geologists; they heal the sick, but they are not physicians; they superintend the schools of great cities, but they are not educators; they enter with success well-nigh every department of human endeavor, but they are not administrators; they glorify the pulpit, but they are not preachers; they exert a healthy influence on politics, but they are not politicians; they contribute largely toward the solution of problems among nations, but they are not statesmen; they enter constructively every field of reform, but they are not reformers. Always they are the *Mothers of Men.*

THREE GROUPS.

Concerning "Votes for Women" the womanhood of the twentieth century is divided into three groups,—Suffragists, Anti-Suffragists, and the numerically greatest group, the indifferent. Either of the two contending groups, to succeed finally, must make positive the potential and win to action the indifferent.

I am not a prophet, but as a plain reader of history I know that success invariably comes to the positive, constructive movement. In their beginnings, the great reforms of history have been cries of protest, uprisings of denunciation; men have been merely against the existing order. But in the sure evolution of liberty, even when the final period of evolution has been revolution, before the last consummation of any freedom, a forward goal has been set, mental and spiritual attitudes have

become positive, a constructive program has been declared, and the battle-cry has been changed from "Don't" to "Do."

The suffrage movement is positive and constructive. The breaking down of the walls of indifference is close at hand. Final and complete triumph is inevitable, and it is not far away.

THE WHY OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT.

But the masculine mind approaches the feminist movement with inquiry and suspicion. He is a rash man who attempts to analyze a woman's mind, to invade with even friendly intent the sanctity of a woman's soul. It is my purpose to tread only a sure path. I would not engage in metaphysical research and philosophical dissertation. I would answer the question of a man's mind with a man's answer.

You would say, the feminist movement is woman's quest for life,—larger,

fuller, more abundant life: it is the inexorable evolution of a woman's soul: it is the world-old struggle of personality to realize itself. But with statements such as these men grope in utter darkness. I search for the man's answer to a man's question.

Education is the hope of woman-suffrage. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Millions think they are opposed to woman-suffrage, when, by every finer instinct of their natures, they are not.

THE MASCULINE ANSWER.

To answer the masculine question, "Why this feminist movement?" I must know woman's dominating impulse, her supreme motive, her consuming passion. And I say, without fear of contradiction, that whether she bears children of her own, or mothers another's, or mothers a community or a state, or a reform, or the world, the

dominating impulse of womanhood is the mother impulse, her motive is the mother motive, her passion is the mother passion. Always it is the impulse, the passion of motherhood,—that her sons and daughters, the sons and daughters of the race, shall be clean, well-bodied, of unspoiled soul, and worthy.

WHERE I FOUND THE ANSWER.

You ask me where I found the answer? The winds did not carry it to me. I did not read it in the stars. I saw it first in my mother's eyes, but then it was altogether a mystery. I found it in the brave eyes of the matchless woman, when with uncovered soul she came back to me from the valley of the shadow of death, bearing our first-born. There in life's holy of holies, with heaven embattled all about, I found the answer. But I did not understand, I did not fathom it, for it is given to no man fully to understand.

THE GREATEST BATTLE.

"The greatest battle that ever was fought,
Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find it not;—
'T was fought by the mothers of men."

'T was fought by uncrowned womanhood; who, when the clouds of battle hung heavy o'er the land, drew from bleeding finger-tips the food for babes at home; who have stood with Spartan fortitude, unbowing, through a thousand gales of compromise; from whose wombs have sprung the empires of freedom, and at whose breasts have nursed the soldiers of liberty and the leaders of every righteous cause since time began; mothers, wives, sisters, sweethearts, who have kindled and rekindled in the hearts of men the fires of truth and patriotism; who, with the mingled

light of devotion and sacrifice shining from their eyes, have sent their sons and loved ones on fields of blood and greater fields of peace, courageous down to war.

NOT A WHIM.

Let no man say that the cry of womanhood is a sudden cry, the expression of a whim, the utterance of a desire just formed. We are at the concentric point of many generations: this is the conclusion of ages. For the good of the race, womanhood did not ask for the ballot one generation too soon.

TRIED EVERY OTHER WAY.

She has tried every other way. She has turned her heart and hand to many promising devices. Bravely she has struggled through the long darkness of prejudice in men and tradition in women. Having tested her footing thoroughly, she knows that her face is set in the only way.

She has borne the iniquities of the double standard; she has gathered up the broken bodies of her sons from off the plains of war; she has watched the virtue of her daughters burning at the stake of man's lust; she has been a beast of burden and a slave of passion. From the day of Noah's great debauch to this year of our Lord she has seen the race struggle down the years beneath its drunken load; she has wept; she has prayed; she has petitioned; she has been a clinging vine; she has wooed; she has gone to the last ditch with sacrifice. To the unequal struggle she has brought every resource of her sex. And she has not failed. Against unnumbered handicaps she has greatly prevailed. *And she will prevail!* To-day her marching legions are on the Plains of Abraham; to-morrow the city falls.

NO QUARREL.

I have no quarrel with the man who says that woman's sphere is the home. Nor have you. I have no quarrel with the man who declares that the home sphere is big enough to command woman's whole life. *I agree.* But what of the at least seven million women in industry, that have no homes, and what are the bounds of the modern home? What of the seven million women driven by necessity, under conditions arising in a masculine government, into public life? "It is to protect the home by protecting themselves that these workers outside the home, whether yet conscious of the fact or not, need the ballot."

And what are we going to do with the Constitution of the United States where it declares in Amendment XIV., Section 1, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jur-

isdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States," etc.?

It will take more than a sex prejudice finally to abridge freedom; it will take more than a sex tradition finally to defeat liberty. And let us remember that a government *of* and *for* the people cannot be *by* the people while half the people are debarred. I hope that I am enough a man to refuse any conspiracy of ignorance or prejudice that would continue the political condition by which women are classed with criminals and aliens.

WOMEN DIFFER FROM MEN.

To say that women differ from men, that the spheres of the two sexes are distinct, is to state the very fundamental reason for woman-suffrage. I yield

to no man in my appreciation of those distinctive attributes of womanhood that have made her the creature of song and story, the adoration of brave knights, and always earth's holiest inspiration to all true masculine hearts. But as the words run in a fantastic tale, "True, we are as you say, creatures of the air. True, we are born with wings. But didn't we have to come down to earth to eat and sleep, to love, to marry, and to bear our young?" Men cannot think for women; men cannot adequately act for women; the most chivalrous men cannot rightly defend the rights of women, and the most cosmopolitan men are not able fully to supply the physical, mental, and spiritual necessities of women. It has been well said: "Men cannot contribute woman's wisdom to the solution of public problems because they do not possess it. And of their legislation without woman's aid, much is folly, and more, a mere

one-eyed wisdom." Mrs. Pankhurst, for protesting—militantly, I grant—but for protesting against a condition against which her soul revolted made herself liable to a sentence of fourteen years. On one of her many days of arraignment she appeared in a court where a fiend, convicted of an unspeakable crime against a little girl twelve years old, receiving the maximum sentence for his offence, was returned to prison for two years. We do not approve of militant methods, but that does not blind our eyes to the horrible shadows of such a contrast.

Women are imperatively needed in the struggle for the solution of life's big problems. And in the fight for human progress where they so gladly join is it the part of chivalry or wisdom to admit them short of fully armed?

BOUND THE HOME.

But the master motive and passion

of womanhood, the mother motive, the mother passion,—what of it? The sphere of womanhood *is* the home, and to the ears of true women in comparison with the home, all other things are *as the challenge of the incidental.*

But here again we are confronted by the facts and conditions of society, society as it is to-day. We have come out of the past, and the present is different! Agreeing that woman's sphere is the home, what is the modern home? What are its present bounds? "The modern home is not a harem, shut away from life around it." And certainly it is not now as it was in the days when the narrow confines of a settler cabin and clearing contained it. "The modern home is a link in the chain of modern society, and as such is exposed to every peril which confronts society." It is surrounded by the food-doper, the pedler of poisonous drugs, the exploiter of child toilers, and the cheapener of labor,

by organized prostitution and the red-mawed liquor traffic. In combating these perils men need the help "which wise, courageous women want to give and which all women owe."

"Man with instincts more largely selfish, has overemphasized his symbol of power, the dollar. Woman, intuitive, keener of conscience, surer of moral vision, and larger of human sympathy, is trying to shift the emphasis upon humanity. Nature's balance will be struck when male and female work together."

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

Yesterday the grain from which the family flour was ground grew on the home acres, was ground in the home mill, and mother baked the great round loaves in the home oven. To-day the grain grows in a thousand far-away fields, is ground in any one of ten thousand distant mills, and baked into

loaves by any pair of ten thousand more or less cleanly hands.

Yesterday mother made William's suit and Sarah's dress from flax grown, gathered, cured, corded, spun, woven, designed, cut, and fashioned,—all within a loud halloo of the kitchen stoop. To-day, perhaps a haggard-eyed consumptive fighting for bread and breath in a crowded sweat-shop of a distant city, with bleeding fingers, bending close her poor diseased eyes, hastily stitched together the little dress your baby wears.

AMUSEMENTS THEN AND NOW.

Yesterday the children gathered in the great kitchen and played charades, or romped under the orchard trees in Black Man and King William, or, in hours of rare abandon, they danced "Skipt-to-ma-loo." To-day, every child of the city is menaced by the dance-hall, the summer garden, the low theatre, and a hundred other public places of

questionable and worse than questionable amusements.

Yesterday we went to school on the hill where the schoolhouse roof was red, the shutters green, and the rule was the rule of three, and where no child was ever spoiled because Solomon's warning was not heeded. To-day our children find, on the road that leads to knowledge, car-tracks and diphtheria, the whims of an ever-changing educational system, and, in not a few instances, the procurers of vice districts.

Yesterday mother settled the child-labor problem with her slipper: to-day the solution of it is at the end of a long road that leads by oyster-beds and cotton-mills, through factories and into deep mines.

The problems of a minimum and living wage for women and the traffic called white slavery are creatures of the home's modern environment, and the answers to their questions must be present-tense answers.

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

And the liquor traffic, the home's fiercest, concrete foe, stands in the road that leads to the ultimate solution of every one of the vital social, economic, moral, and political problems of this tremendous human crisis. *And it is driven out of the way only by the ballot.*

Woman suffrage has no more unrelenting enemy than the liquor traffic; the enfranchisement of womanhood must become a fact in government in spite of the liquor traffic. Call "John Barleycorn" all the hard names in the vocabulary of decency and patriotism save one;—never call him a fool. Jack London in his compelling story, "John Barleycorn," written in the form of an autobiography, relates that he rode down from his California ranch to vote for woman-suffrage, because he knew that it would be another weapon for the smiting of the liquor traffic. And let

no suffragists make the mistake of silence in the hope of placating the "trade." May the day speedily come when every woman's club, every female organization, in the United States, will stand outspokenly for a saloonless nation.

Yes, the home is woman's sphere. Not the home as it was—the home as it is. Not the simple, shaded path of yesterday, but a toiler's rugged road that leads from the door-stoop into every department of human endeavor, through every phase of society's unrest, and that girdles the globe. *For to-day the four posts of the home are the four corners of the earth.*

THE ISSUE.

Let us face the issue squarely. A great militant question challenges the women of the race. It rises from sweatshops, and factories, and brothels, and mines, and molten furnaces. It is the

cry of the city and it is the cry of the town. This is the question: *"What are you going to do about it?"*

There are two possible answers to the question. One is the answer of tradition, and the answer of tradition is that woman's political helplessness is her power, that woman's weakness is her strength. The method that this answer suggests, is, in the last analysis, the method of seduction. Not necessarily, not generally, gross, immoral seduction, but the seduction of smiles and tears, the seduction of the wheedler and the clinging vine.

The other answer is the answer of woman's strength, and it opens the road of equality by which, in all the complexities of modern life, the sexes shall complement each other.

Shall it be a resolution or a vote? I would rather have my wife and mother and sisters and daughter go into the polling-booth with a clean American

ballot than to the political boss, with tearful intercessions—a political boss who would very likely have eyes for only their physical charms.

Which of the two answers is the fair, clean, honest one? Which is the American answer? Which is the right answer?

What is society? *Who* are society? Government ought to be society's best expression of itself. It cannot be if society's morally better part does not speak. What is *government,* in the last analysis? Government is an institution of laws, powers, functions, and spirit. And how is government achieved? No man has ever weighed a prayer, or fathomed a tear, or valued a smile; but government is not by tears, nor prayers, nor smiles;—government is by *votes.*

GOVERNMENT BY VOTES.

Prayers as numberless as the sands

on the seashore have reached the Almighty's throne, supplicating the destruction of the liquor traffic. An ocean of tears has flowed, a billion hearts have broken; all the wiles of frantic mothers ready to sell their lives, if not to give their souls, have been employed that saloon doors might be closed forever, and to-day the rum institution still rests in the protecting shelter of a masculine dollar sign. *Only by stainless ballots shall we ever achieve a stainless flag.* When the women of America are granted the voting-privileges of citizenship, we will bury the liquor traffic beneath an avalanche of votes, deeper than the foundations of the earth!

WILL NOT CURE ALL ILLS.

But enthusiasm must not lead us into unwarranted hopes. Woman's suffrage will not solve at once all the ills of the race. It is hardly fair to require wom-

en to correct in a few decades the accumulated masculine mistakes of uncounted generations. They will commit follies; they will make mistakes; they will go astray. Even we of the "superior" sex have committed political follies, made mistakes, and gone astray. "Democracy is at best a succession of stumbles forward. But democracy is society's last recourse, since all other philosophies of government have been tried and found wanting." And without votes for women democracy is an attempt to walk by hopping on one leg.

WHAT SUFFRAGE HAS ALREADY DONE.

But let no one think that suffrage where it is in the process of demonstration is a failure. *In the State of Washington at least nine progressive laws must be credited largely to woman-suffrage, in Oregon twelve, in Utah thir-

*This was the legislative situation in the suffrage States in 1913.

teen, in Colorado sixteen, in Idaho nine, in Wyoming nine, and in California nineteen. These laws have to do with the home, the school, reform institutions and asylums, juvenile courts, pure foods and drugs, working conditions of men, women, and children, public health and morals, conservation of natural resources, and the greatest conservation of all—the conservation of humanity. In nearly all of the suffrage States the age of consent has been raised to eighteen years. It is hard to realize that in some instances it used to be as low as seven years, and that it is still as low as twelve years in a few States.

The blows of woman-suffrage fall naturally for humanity's uplift. Woman-suffrage strikes and will strike against child labor and white slavery, for mothers' pensions and vocational training in public schools, for the establishment of public parks and for the shortening to a proper length of the hours of toil.

And it will speed the day when women will say to men, in the words of Dean Sumner of Chicago: "No longer shall you exploit my sex in vicious marriage selection. Children of women no longer shall be compelled to suffer with blind eyes, twisted limbs, and idiotic brains because of the sins of their fathers." The double standard of morality must go, and the immoral dance and immodest dress, leading reasons why boys go wrong, must not survive.

ARE WE FAIR?

But I am charged with unfairness. Have I not ignored many of the strong, direct arguments against woman-suffrage? Thus far I have tried to deal with basic principles. A mass of incidental contentions I have brushed aside.

Should the responsibilities of the vote be thrust upon women who do not want it, who are opposed to having it?

Yes, if woman suffrage is right. The only time a male citizen has any right deliberately to remain away from the polls is when the candidates or principles before the people give him no opportunity to express himself, do not in any way represent him. *Even then it is a tragedy.* Any citizen who stays away from the polls for any other reason than conscience or physical disability should be temporarily disfranchised. We who enjoy for ourselves and our children the benefits of a free government are required by the moral law, and ought to be required by the law of the land, to pay the price of our liberties. *Only thus can worthy government survive.*

Will not men lose the spirit of chivalry when we disturb the so-called balance of the sexes? Had I less confidence in true manhood, I might concede the point.

As to women serving on juries, they have from the beginning handed down

the most vital judgments of the race, and as rulers, from the standpoint of administration, I know of no queens in history who altogether failed. Many succeeded in spite of frightful odds. Even Cleopatra was less a failure than Antony. She did not desert her country.

TEACHERS OF PATRIOTISM.

Men have been wofully slow in discovering that women, to whom by common consent is delegated the major portion of the moral, religious, educational, and patriotic training of the youth, are actually deprived of the one practical text-book by which the vital lessons of citizenship are taught.

We will agree with Mrs. LaFollette that "the training of the children is the peculiar province of women." And the complexities of modern life are increasing tremendously the burden of womanhood at this most strategic point. To

a greater or less extent every man of the twentieth century is a travelling man, an itinerant. And when he is at home, he is n't at home. He is off in the morning before the children are up, and without what used to be an American institution—the family altar (God pity us for the loss of it; God speed the day of its return). He takes his lunch down-town or out of a basket by the side of the track, and reaches home at night after the little ones are tucked away. This is the daily schedule of the average masculine American.

Thus far we have demanded of women, in the training of our sons for citizenship, that they not only carry the greater portion of our load, but that they give what they themselves do not possess, that they impart what they themselves have not received. That mothers have borne and reared presidents and other honorable men in spite of the terrific handicap is a glorious evi-

dence of the power of womanhood, but a very mean argument to use against suffrage.

CO-PARTNERS IN THE STATE.

We must remember, too, that when a husband and wife do not grow together, they grow apart. In proportion as husband and wife have mutual interests, the years bind their hearts and blend their lives. The privileges and responsibilities of citizenship have and should have a large place in the development of the normal man, and men and women will not be so well mated as the Creator intended they should be until women are men's co-partners in the state.

As to the great economic questions of the hour, the tariff for instance, it is not hard to concede to women the same degree of aptitude and knowledge manifested by the average masculine statesman of present-day public life.

John Kendrick Bangs says that the

polling-place is not a fit place for women to enter—when only men are around; and I agree.

Women have led personally some of the mightiest movements in human progress. Recall Joan of Arc, Mary Lyon, Frances Willard, Mrs. Stevens, and Jane Addams. Women have been the fountainheads of every great movement; they have borne the soldiers of every reform, the captains of every emancipation; and this is greater than the bearing of arms.

THE "BRAVEST BRAVERY."

But be careful how you apply the test of "bravest bravery," my masculine interrogator. I have come up through the cosmopolitan school of the average American young man. I have seen courage, the courage of the gridiron and the hunt, the courage that beards the character-assassin in his political lair of graft, the courage that marches in

khaki, beneath streaming banners and behind pounding drums, and I have seen the courage of the humdrum—the rarest of all; but I never saw courage until a brown-eyed bit of feminine pure gold, brave enough to say "Yes" when I wooed her in an old Ohio homestead,—the mother of my children, God bless her!—showed it to me.

Do you insist that I go to the inexorable end with my argument? Do you say, Equal at the polls, then equal in toil, equal in vices? *When true womanhood carries a hod, she carries it with all the dignity of a queen;* but where true men are, she will never again carry a hod. Equal in vices? No *man* says that, for God made true womanhood different.

THE LAST QUESTION.

And now I have reached my last question. It was the last question I faced before I surrendered to woman-suffrage.

By easy stages I had passed the place where I said, When *all* women or a *great majority* of them, want the ballot, then they ought to have it. The smaller questions and objections no longer troubled me, but this very real problem confronted me: Will suffrage defeminize women? Will it take away the tender touch, render coarse the soft note, dry the tear of sympathy, and deaden the mother heart? Had I been compelled to find an affirmative answer to this question, no power could make me urge "votes for women."

A LITTLE JOURNEY HOME.

Last summer I went home—back to the old home. Back where a great city stands by a beautiful Oregon river and a snow-crowned mountain looks down from a sapphire sky. It was the Fourth of July, and there was a parade. I have seen many parades, many Fourth of July parades. I have seen many pa-

rades in that, my native city. One that I remember especially I viewed from my father's shoulder, when the president came to town. But east or west or north or south I had never before seen a Fourth of July parade like that parade.

First in line came the city's "bluecoats," filling the street. Following the battalion of police walked with head erect the mayor, and under his arm was a *Bible!* Behind the mayor walked the more than one hundred boys of his Sunday-school class, and each lad carried a Bible. Behind the marching boys came a military band playing "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and behind the band trudged and sang twelve thousand men, women, and children from the Sunday schools of Portland, Oregon. A Fourth of July parade? Yes. And the reason? A few months before, for the first time in history, the women of Portland voted. They went to the polls and

elected a reform administration. They swept the city clean. My mother and my sister helped. Father cast his one vote, and the women of his family cast their two! The great, good men of the city had tried again and again. Standing alone they had failed. The day that saw women vote for the first time in the metropolis of Oregon was Portland's great emancipation-day.

MOTHER HAD NOT CHANGED.

That night I went to bed in the old home, and by my side slept a little fellow, bearing my name and carrying my blood in his veins. Just such a little fellow as I was before I grew up and went away. Midnight came, and I had not slept. My heart was stirred by a hundred emotions, and my mind was memory's picture gallery. Then across the threshold of the quiet room swept, soft as an angel, a figure of white. The cold comes down at night in the North-

west. No sweltering there through sleepless, humid terrors! Mother feared that I might be uncovered and chilled in my sleep. Often she had found me thus. Close by my bed she came, and in the dim moonlight that crept under the blinds I saw her stooping low. I closed my eyes. I felt her fingers touch the coverlet. She tucked it deftly—then a pause—and then, as light as a breath from the Milky Way, her lips brushed my forehead. *Mother, voting citizen of Oregon, had not changed.*

To-day she is as tender as ever, as true and brave and pure and wise as ever. But she is stronger now, and more potent. She is a ruler in a city and a State. Her voice is a voice that counts and is counted. Where yesterday it spoke only to plead, to-day it speaks, for every interest of home and country, with authority.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

And so here is the conclusion of the whole matter. The ballot will be a weapon of uplift and freedom in the brave hands of the Mothers of Men. It will smite the greed that capitalizes childhood; it will open a way out of cotton-fields, factories, and mines into God's open country of birds and flowers; and it will swing wide the barred doors of knowledge. It will beat back the avarice that makes women barren, the red light of shame will grow dim before it, and the iniquitous double standard of morals will not prevail against it. It will strike for pure foods and drugs, for a minimum and living wage, and for the new freedom that makes no man a despot and every man a king.

It will hear first the call of life, and when it has heard that call the battlements of gold will not be able to withstand it. It will protect the defenceless

and weak, and the strong will feel its thrust only when strength is mean and power vicious.

When its day has fully come, the nations will no longer tremble beneath the tread of armies marching down to war, for the soldier-bearing women of the world will overthrow the bloody altar of Mars, and to-morrow those who to-day bear arms for kings and emperors will carry the benign burdens of a constructive and universal peace.

It will be an all-powerful weapon, for it is the love weapon of the world; it will not fail, for in the hand that grasps it is the passion of motherhood, and in the arm that wields it is the strength of the Lord God of hosts.

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